

Consultation with the Chickaloon Native Village on Cook Inlet General Permits August 2013

Chickaloon Comments

- We hope to give you a more thorough and complete understanding of our perspective.
- We hope you take it into consideration, and don't just shelve it somewhere in one of those big fat documents.
- The trust responsibility of the federal government, EPA being part of that, and the state falling under that, has responsibility to provide not only us, but all communities, protection.
- That responsibility is not linked to only 1 project. A lot of things are intertwined and connected, and you have to look at everything.
- In this case, as with a lot of things the state puts forth, we think they have a conflict of interest that's pro-development, and not beneficial for Alaska natives or Alaska people.
- Carbon dioxide's going down, heat's going up, fuel's going up. Alaska people, not just natives, don't see the benefit (of oil and gas).
- From our perspective, as Alaska natives, that's your guys' (the federal government's) responsibility, to see that this not be done to us.
- And don't tell us that that's (trust responsibility's) understood and followed through on.
- This may be a government-to-government consultation, but I hope it's truly a government-to-government consultation, not just words.
- As human beings, we deserve to be heard and listened to. It's not an easy thing to express how we feel in this kind of forum.
- My goal is that you really do listen, hear, and take away this knowledge, and not have it shelved for 20 years then put in a shredder.
- Notably, we want to have you value it, what we're going to be talking about, about how we feel about it also, and how you people may feel. We'd also like to get some action out of what we end up telling you.
- What's happened in the past, you come to talk to us, and go back and do what you're going to do, and not give any real consideration to what was said. I hope we can get past that, that's what I'm going for.
- We want to maintain our stewardship. To go through the government-to-government process and try to see if we can learn, both of us, and do the best we can do.
- He's our elder so he has the last word.
- (abbreviated EPA presentation)
- We're concerned with muds and cuttings. What's in muds and cuttings?
- We're concerned with mixing zones. How did ADEC determine mixing zones are as small as practicable?
- So Cook Inlet is like a confined body of seawater, with some freshwater flowing into it. Just consider it like this cup of coffee (clear mug), and call this (splash of cream) a mix of toluene, with a little bit of other stuff in drilling muds, put that much in, just a little bit, along with all the other stuff, not mixing well. Would you want to drink, bathe, or swim in it? And mix it up a bit, does that make it any better?
- Mixing it up doesn't make it any better, or any less contaminated.

- Then look at the cumulative effects (adding rest of cream). That's what we're drinking. That's what our fish are in, our beluga, and our sea animals, all of them.
- I'm wondering how this is going to work, how this makes anything any better, this mixing zone.
- Japan meningitis, report --, industrial waste was dumped in the water. Meningitis was traced back to waste dumped in it.
- That's what I believe you people (EPA) are allowing these people (DEC) to do to our food and our water.
- All the things you allow them to put in the water, it's like toxic soup.
- Drilling muds? I don't think fish want to eat them or breathe them. That's in the water.
- We didn't let off these big clouds of toxic smoke. That's also what they have to breathe. And this with the seismic testing (banging on table, mixing and spilling coffee).
- I'll quit there. Are they (sea animals) going to be allowed to quit there? No. They'll be waiting to jump out of the water.
- This is what's going to be happening right here, unless you do something. Otherwise you guys are just going to give some permits out.
- Some people don't like these ways. You guys are allowing the rape of mother earth.
- The "p" in permits is like pandering, pandering to oil companies.
- And allowing them to rape mother earth. All they have to do is get permits from you guys.
- Fine, damage will be done again. Can you undo that damage? Can you? Any of you? No.
- Until you can undo that damage, you shouldn't be allowing anyone to have those permits.
- We're talking about resources, that can't be replaced, any of it.
- A prime example is happening now on the East coast with dolphins, --- yes. Reported over 200 dead dolphins from Virginia to Maine.
- It's sad that we have to wait to get to that point before we wonder why.
- Now it's something with females --- at higher rate than males, don't --- much, with --- higher rate than calves.
- It won't take long before all animals and ocean life are affected.
- I'm not a highly technical person, as is a permit writer, but it seems you're relying on a lot of speculation, and on stuff provided by companies with interests, and that's concerning to me.
- You're building something that's supposed to be protective.
- You're questioning where fish are but still going forward with methods of speculation.
- The federal government has trust responsibility, in order to do that, --- .
- We've been here for centuries, and we haven't had any of these problems, until recently.
- To transfer over permits to the state, and other entities, not looking out for our interests like they should be, ---.
- There should at least be co-management, where we have equal say in whether permits get issued.
- As someone --- before --- should be considered.
- Article 12 section 12 ---. Instead have opposite happening.
- We're trying to --- our stewardship, but we have legislative bodies limiting our ability as tribal governments to do that, like with (AK) House Bill 77.
- I think we're all good people, and we want to do what's right. But I think with who your bosses are, you'll have a hard time. And you guys will be mad at us.
- Now you guys on the front lines make decisions and have to defend them.

- Given what I know, there's no way I would be issuing these permits.
- I can't explain it in Latin words, but you know what I mean with that (coffee) demonstration.
- What's going on in the water with milk and coffee? That's cumulative effects vs. only what you're proposing.
- But what's already happening currently, we're screening out thick stuff, but there's a lot of stuff not being treated, it can't really be. Like runoff from streets in Kenai, Anchorage, and Soldotna.
- You know but you can't do it, what I'm trying to say. Where else are things going to go? This is it.
- It's like someone moving into your house and smoking cigarettes and peeing on your floors. Where are you going to move to? Where are they?
- There aren't many pristine places left in this world. And this isn't pristine anymore but ---.
- Practice what you preach. Use environmentally friendly soap. Don't drop cars into gravel pits.
- We learn from our mistakes. When we learn something is harmful and we don't do it anymore. Society and government agencies can't seem to do that. I don't know why.
- I set high hopes today, but my experience often differs from my hopes.
- We've been teleconferencing with other tribal governments, we're all voicing the same concerns.
- We're sharing common language and concerns for human health, environmental health, aquatic health. We're all thinking the same way.
- It feels like we have to get loud, and give demonstrations, to be heard.
- One common -- we don't understand, how can we be clearer?
- This entire process is so convoluted.
- It appears that you hear, that you're hearing a lot of these words. We hope it's being heard, and that's it's not just the words.
- We're hearing people say the same things. And we said the same things in 2006. What's going to be different?
- How many of you eat fish? How many of you enjoy fishing?
- Our concern isn't just for native people. It affects everybody, not just us.
- Our friends and neighbors, we help them build houses. We haven't always just looked out for us. We've been slowly --- what we have.
- It wasn't messed up when you guys got here, but it is now. We're just asking you guys to help us with that.
- There are cultural differences in what we're trying to communicate.
- There's a more traditional definition of subsistence. The dictionary definition is simply to exist. We're not trying to simply exist, it's much more than that.
- I googled the definition last. My first inclination, I asked some elders, then I looked online for a definition.
- I asked a language teacher, how do you say the word subsistence in Ahtna (Athabascan)? How do you say this word in our language, subsistence? In Ahtna, this is when --- come, when the fish come. Not what I was after. I stewed, I racked my brain.
- In a Federal Subsistence Working Group meeting, --- said, in Yupik it's when fish come, this is when berries are ready. What are you trying to say I asked? She squeezed her hands together really tight, and she said that's our relationship with the land, it's one.
- There's no way to say that in our language. It's like a story no one word can elicit. The same as a story, you have to feel what you're talking about.

- With the Cook Inlet contaminants study, we tried to explain what we're talking about today multiple times, to ACOE in D.C., to EPA in Anchorage.
- In so many meetings I've tried to explain my heart out, our link with the land is one.
- People are telling you today, slow---, we don't want these things, don't do these things, change your behaviors.
- I think it's a cultural difference. With western culture, society wouldn't necessarily talk about something with so much feeling. Describing with strong feelings should be about teaching ---.
- So it's different because that feeling is that relationship we have with that land and water.
- School teaches us that, values through feelings. We can empathize, sympathize, know how to act accordingly, do things in correct ways, right ways.
- This gets lost in government-to-government. You can talk about technology, numbers, rates, which data from where. What I want to hear is how you feel, about this process, and about doing these things.
- Add a step in the process. Step outside your comfort zone. How do you feel about what this is?
- This is our life. --- ---.
- I want to hear about federal trust responsibility.
- What steps you'll take to protect us, that is federal trust responsibility. We look for federal government to fulfill this.
- Sad, when you would prefer feds would have jurisdiction, because they will at least listen to you.
- From our guests, I'm glad you're here, but I want to know, what do you have to learn from these perspectives, and how are you going to protect us? (break)
- Who is providing pollution prevention on sites and how is it being done? Is it all self-reporting?
- What happens to chronic polluters? Do something that really impacts them, to make them not want to do that.
- If they're still going to make money at the end of the day, it's still worth it (to pollute).
- I think it also seems like these permits are written to benefit companies as opposed to protecting. For example, every 6 months vs. annual WET testing. Do some for a year, then less and less time.
- I'm concerned that it seems like there are things being written in, and there's use of studies relying on old data that should be verified by other folks, there's a lot of that in this.
- And it's built into the permits, the expectation of self-monitoring.
- Talking about chemicals, do they have to provide you with these lists prior to getting permits? In defining limits, is that part of getting permits- kinds, quantities, and confirming it was this or less?
- How do you ascertain whether they've actually told you the truth?
- They (oil and gas companies) kind of remind of me spoiled children. They've gotten their way all this time, and you want to put the brakes on them.
- The state of Alaska has a conflict of interest in this arena. They want this at any cost and expense.
- An Alaska kid commented, you can't be there all the time, but the employees can be there.
- See how much strength you can put in for Alaska.
- People who live here and fish here care.
- Hey, you said you have POCs? - --. There are whistle blower protections, get in break rooms, I think you'll build more trust. Go fishing with --. Part of reason --- is lack of trust.
- Need more Alaskans than regulators, not just people from Florida here to make a quick buck. They won't tell you what went on the middle of the night, but an Alaska kid will.

- Moose Creek restoration project, specific to coal vs. oil and gas, is a personal experience of us trying to fix what companies came in and destroyed, this creek comes into Cook Inlet.
- (video about Moose Creek restoration project)
- It's hard to have culture around a bologna sandwich.
- Life is a big circle. This is just one of those steps along the way. We're looking for it to continue.
- We're willing to do more than just talk about it to try to fix problems composed in the past.
- Right now that stream we fixed, they want to re-mine that stream. To get around us, they want to put in a pipe to get around EPA and ACOE permits.
- The state of Alaska says that's ok to do these things, they're streamlining it so they can, around rules designed to protect us. And throwing out permits to protect the water that we already filed.
- House Bill 77 doesn't want to let us protect in stream flows for these salmon.
- Most people I meet are good people. I wonder how this (HB 77) gets passed. They must just throw their hands up. I don't understand it.
- I'm one of the ones who still hopes for humanity. A lot of other people don't, are very cynical.
- I still have hope. I hope you guys go back and do the right things.
- The root word is subsistence. "Sub" is somewhere below that. We don't want that, we want to live. Subsistence is a strange word to me. We don't want that, we want to live.
- It's not just food, it's actually a way of life. And it still is our economy, spirituality, our health system, food, clothing, shelter, protection, store, everything.
- It's what gets lost in today's age, with talk of moose, salmon, and caribou areas, we're limited what we can take in each arena.
- Subsistence is much --- than that, and everything we're doing to the environment affects that.
- Whenever people say, why don't these native people just convert to the 21st century, just go to the store like the rest of us do, I cry, or I almost cry.
- They just don't get it. People who do that die of cancer and diabetes.
- Our past is our future. We'd be so much healthier. Truth be told, everybody would be.
- We'd be healthier if we didn't run to the grocery store and buy processed foods, and allow GMO kinds of things, more salts, and all their chemicals, to enter our food.
- But our fish are dying. When they're gone, what will we do and eat?
- Pollutants are not just on the land but in the sea.
- What will we do? We can't eat money. We can't eat chemicals. We can't survive that way.
- We hope you heard what we're telling you from your hearts. Instead of questions and frustrations, we're telling you about this perspective.
- We hope that you figure out a different way to listen and to hear what's important.
- Asking us for comments on technical stuff is not easy for us to do. We speak a different language. You hear resources as I would think lifeways.
- The (AK) Governor says I wouldn't trade one resource for another. We have anyway, and it's gonna impact our lifeway.
- It's frustrating, it's scary, and we don't feel heard.
- So you get to hear today, again, we're hoping it doesn't get shelved somewhere.
- You can tell the Governor, we invite him to come talk to us.
- You get the last word (to the eldest).
- Mostly I'm quiet. Thank you guys for coming. At least we have more information than we had before, maybe. We hope everything comes out ok. Have a nice day.